

Re: Girl Scout Astronomy Badge

Source: <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.astro.amateur/2005-08/msg00124.html>

- *From:* "canopus56" <canopus56@xxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* 31 Jul 2005 18:33:59 -0700
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Chris L Peterson wrote:

- > There was some discussion here a few months ago about the Boy Scout
- > Astronomy Merit Badge requirements. As it happens, I'm helping my niece
- > with her Girl Scout requirements, which make the Boy Scout requirements
- > look like graduate school in comparison.

Here are some activities for the boy scout merit badge requirement (ages 11-17), which is publically available on the net at - <http://www.usscouts.org/mb/mb022.html>

For boys 11-17:

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3. With the aid of diagrams (or real telescopes if available), do each of the following:

- Explain why binoculars and telescopes are important astronomical tools. Demonstrate or explain how these tools are used.
- Describe the similarities and differences of several types of astronomical telescopes.
- Explain the purposes of at least three instruments used with astronomical telescopes.

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5. Do the following:

- list the names of the five most visible planets. Explain which ones can appear in phases similar to lunar phases and which ones cannot, and explain why.
- Find out when each of the five most visible planets that you identified in requirement 5a will be observable in the evening sky during the next 12 months, then compile this information in the form of a chart or table. Update your chart monthly to show whether each planet will be visible during the early morning or in the evening sky.

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The analogous merit badge at the girl scouts is for a different age group - the Junior Girl Scouts ages 8-11 and is titled "Sky Search".

Compare -

http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/insignia/list/junior.asp

with

http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/insignia/list/11_17.asp

Re: Girl Scout Astronomy Badge

The requirements for the junior girl scout merit badge apparently are unavailable on the web. It appears the GSA wants you to buy the Junior GSA Handbook to find out.

>>From one outstanding web based program at the Alder Planetarium of Chicago, Ill., one can infer that the requirements are similar –

<http://hou.lbl.gov/~vhoette/GirlScouts/actaquay.html>

<http://hou.lbl.gov/~vhoette/GirlScouts/>

For girls 8–11:

- =====
6. Learn about the differences in the brightness of stars.
 - a. Distinguish stars by their brightness.
 - b. Model the magnitude system used by astronomers to classify star brightness.
 - c. Compare the brightness of stars with auto aperture, an image analysis tool.
 - d. Find stars and their brightness counts by using an image analysis tool called 'FIND'.

In one requirement, Activity #6, the Junior GSA program appears to exceed the Eagle Scout merit badge program – girls study star colors and observe stars through different colored filters.

<http://hou.lbl.gov/~vhoette/GirlScouts/actaquay.html#Star%20Color>

<http://hou.lbl.gov/~vhoette/GirlScouts/StarColor/>

6. Learn about the differences in the color of stars.
 - a. Notice the color of stars in photographs.
 - b. Experiment with filters to see how they block colors or let colors pass through.

The Alder program even has an imaging processing program to process FITS images.

<http://sunra.lbl.gov/~vhoette/ToolBox/>

The Girl Scout program for age 11–17 does not have an analogous "Sky Search" merit badge. The activity for that age group is called "Space Exploration" – which focuses in part on science career exploration. I was unable to find any trustworthy lists of the activities for that age bracket.

For either Boy Eagle Scouts or Girl Scouts, the Hands–On–Universe site at the Alder Planetarium looks like a good activity resource.

<http://hou.lbl.gov/~vhoette/Explorations/>

I am not involved with either boy or girl scouting. Should I be speaking out of ignorance of both fine programs, any corrections or clarifications would be appreciated.

Chris, hope the Alder site helps with your niece.

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– Canopus56

P.S. –

> At the bottom of this page of requirements are three images– one of
> which is horribly wrong: <http://www.cloudbait.com/misc/gscoutastro.jpg>

You mean the terminator rising south to north instead of east to west?
LOL!

• *Follow-Ups:*

◆ ***Re: Girl Scout Astronomy Badge***

◇ *From:* Chris L Peterson

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